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A Primer on the Higher Education Act (HEA)

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Summary:

The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) as amended, authorizes the federal government's major federal student aid programs (Title IV), as well as other programs which provide institutional aid and support (Titles II, III and V). In addition, the HEA authorizes services and support to less-advantaged students (select Title IV programs), and to students pursuing international education and certain graduate and professional degrees (Titles VI and VII). The programs authorized by the HEA are administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and made available an estimated 70% (\$94 billion) of all federal, state, and institutional aid awarded to postsecondary students in 2005-2006 (excluding tax benefits). The principal objective of the HEA is to expand postsecondary education opportunity, particularly for low-income individuals, and to increase affordability for moderate income families as well. The heart of the legislation is its student aid programs authorized under Title IV, which provide student aid in the form of grants, loans, and work-study assistance. There are seven titles of the HEA that authorize numerous programs and provisions designed to provide assistance to postsecondary students and institutions. This report provides a brief overview of major provisions of the HEA. It is organized by title and part of the act. This report will not be updated.

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